

archives

June 11, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Members of OCI

SUBJECT : The National Intelligence Daily

INTRODUCTION

The Director has accepted my recommendation that the experimental phase of the National Intelligence Daily be ended and that it be continued on a permanent basis. This memorandum presents for the members of OCI the reasons for that decision. I hope out of this will come a better understanding of our purposes and especially a fuller realization of the Office's accomplishments.

1. When OCI was asked last summer to publish a daily newspaper, I agreed to examine the project though I had considerable doubt as to its wisdom and feasibility. It was clear from the beginning that a newspaper could not be done on the cheap, another by-product of our usual activities. It would be a major project, one which would draw in substantial manpower and one which would necessarily regulate many of our other activities. The cost would only be worthwhile if it provided a better way of informing our primary audience, the forty to fifty officers of government who make up the NSC, its subcommittees, and their senior staffs. These are the people OCI--and CIA--was created in the first instance to serve. To meet their needs any effort is justified; any project directed to another purpose, however useful, must be secondary.

2. There were great risks involved. We were not at all sure the project was technically possible in terms of resources, time, and security. We were not confident that an intellectually respectable product could be produced in this format. Most important, we were uncertain whether that product, however distinguished, would be recognized and accepted as such by the readers for whom it was intended. We knew we would have

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to break new ground; a successful intelligence newspaper would have to meld the highest professional and technical standards of the newspaperman with those of the intelligence officer. We would have to create something quite new.

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3. Thanks to the work begun last summer by [REDACTED] and carried through the fall by [REDACTED] and the others who were drawn into the newspaper project, we were able to satisfy ourselves that we could indeed produce a National Intelligence Daily of professional quality. Several of us gradually--some reluctantly--became convinced that the Daily could provide a radically improved service, more current, more flexible, more readable, more comprehensive, and more analytic than conventional intelligence publications. The experience also confirmed our belief, however, that this could be done only if the Daily became our primary periodical, and if OCI's organization, procedures, and publications were restructured to this end. Moreover, a sampling of reader reaction showed confusion over what we were trying to do, resistance to departure from traditional forms, and a tendency to view the project as frivolous. But the slow conversion from skeptics to believers of those of us most closely associated with the Daily gave us hope that, given time, our readers also would become converts.

4. Accordingly, we decided to take a chance, but to proceed cautiously. The Daily would be launched as an experimental publication. Each recipient would be briefed in detail on the Daily before he was exposed to it. We would continue the experiment for several months, would not be discouraged by initial reactions, and would during that time offer no alternative high-level publication. Only then would we again consult the readership, weigh its reaction against the costs and the strains on ourselves, and decide whether to continue.

5. This crucial point has now been passed. We have consulted our readers, and have learned that the experiment has worked: the great majority now prefer

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the Daily, and only one expresses a dislike. We have re-examined our internal procedures with a view to identifying the points of strain and easing these strains where we can. We have examined the Daily's impact on our other production and have tried to measure the costs of producing it. The results of this work are summarized below.

6. Reader reaction. Over four fifths of the returns are in. The responses in simplified terms are as follows: 26 are generally favorable; 4 have mixed feelings, 6 for various reasons would prefer a Black NIB, 2 generally disapprove, and 7 have yet to respond. The more negative responses are largely from the lower half of the pecking order.

a. Of the most important group--NSC and WSAG members:

--Secretary Kissinger has told the DCI he has no objection to publication of the Daily. Alone of our readers, he gets the PDB; he apparently finds it sufficient.

--Secretary Schlesinger says he likes the Daily, with minor reservations.

--Admiral Moorer, Mr. Rush, General Scowcroft, Secretary Shultz, and Secretary Simon are enthusiastic.

--The Vice President and Mr. Clements have not yet been heard from.

b. Among the other principals, Messrs. Sisco, Lord, Springsteen, Calloway, McLucas, Ambassador Johnson, Generals Brown and Seignious and six members of the NSC Staff are in favor.

--Mr. Ash, Secretary Weinberger and two members of the NSC Staff have mixed feelings.

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--A letter from Adm. Rectanus states that "The Navy" would on balance prefer a Black NIB. His letter is not particularly critical of the Daily, however. The three Navy principals did not respond separately.

--One NSC Staff member said he dislikes the Daily. Gen. Abrams asked that his copy be discontinued some weeks ago.

--Messrs. Flanigan, Sonnenfeldt, Eagleburger, and Ikle have not responded.

c. Among Intelligence principals:

--Messrs. Hall and Morell, and Generals Allen, Aaron, and Keegan are in favor.

--Adm. De Poix would prefer a Black NIB, but personally seems to find the Daily useful. Mr. Hyland takes the same position, but apparently would be in favor if the Assistant Secretaries of State were recipients. Adm. Rectanus clearly prefers a Black Book.

--Adm. Anderson has not yet responded.

Many of these responses were obtained by a questionnaire passed to the recipients through the USIB principals. The remainder, including the most important, were obtained by the DCI in his face-to-face dealings. All responded of course to the basic issue, but answers to the detailed questions in the questionnaire were often incomplete. There were, however, no surprises. (Each Division will be given a copy of the set of replies, and you are invited to read them.)

7. Human Costs. As many of you know, I asked [redacted] to preside over an effort to evaluate from the working level the impact of the Daily on OCI. Her committee's report will be made available to you. I do not agree with everything said, but accept it as

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a guide to the places where we must do better. Many of its recommendations are excellent and will be carried out. Some of the problems, however, must be looked on as facts of life; they can occasionally be softened, but they cannot be made to go away. The major difficulties seem to be these:

a. A feeling that the Daily is some sort of bizarre whim, imposed on top of all our other requirements, and produced with an effort greatly disproportionate to the number of readers. Paragraphs 1-4 above are intended to respond to this concern. The point is that these are the readers that matter.

b. Confusion over our priorities and audiences, and the relationships among our publications. A separate paper will be distributed on this subject.

c. A wholly justified concern whether the Daily is accepted by its readers. As noted in Paragraph 6, this question now appears to be answered.

d. Confusion as to various aspects of the Daily: reporting vs. analysis; relationship to the commercial press; topics to be covered, etc. The short answer to these questions is that there is no black-and-white answer to any of them. Like most human enterprises, production of the Daily entails a series of judgments in circumstances that rarely repeat themselves identically. There is enough room in the Daily, however, to achieve a number of purposes at once. Another paper to be circulated will discuss these problems; it will not offer easy answers.

e. Resentment of a strong editorial hand. This problem has always vexed OCI, and is now exacerbated by the transfer of some editorial work into off-duty hours. Editorial procedures can and will be simplified, but I will not set any policy that reduces the responsibility either of the producing division or of the editorial staff for the quality of the final product. Ultimately I am responsible, and I believe the best

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Daily will continue to come from the fruitful, if occasionally adversary, interplay of these two elements. The Daily has astonished many skeptics by the standards it has set. Its success we owe to the dedication and experience of our analysts who give the Daily its substantive strength, and equally to the editor who gives it readability and continuity, and a distinctive and literate style. I will accept friction, and the occasional lost nuance, for this overall impact. Those who cannot comprehend this should read Thurber's The Years with Ross. Excellence is worth quite a bit of anguish.

8. Money Costs. So far, we have spent [REDACTED] in one-time costs for the Daily. This breaks down as follows: 25X1A

Move and reconstruction of space
Pneumatic tube
Equipment
Brief cases and locks
Supplies

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In addition, conversion of the Daily area to a vault will cost [REDACTED] (Security requires that 7th floor vaults have grills over the windows, and the price of steel is high.) Continuing costs are almost entirely due to increased night differential, overtime, and Sunday pay. They amount to about [REDACTED] per pay period. There is apparently some misapprehension that additional expenditures of this sort have a limiting effect on our rate of promotion. This is simply not so. The Office is given an allocation of grades and positions within which it must operate, entirely independent of direct money expenditures. Promotions have been somewhat limited by administrative restrictions which went with last year's reduction in strength, and which should disappear as we reach that figure. In FY 73 we made 76 promotions from a T/O of [REDACTED] in FY 74, 61 pro-25X1A motions from [REDACTED] The rate should improve in FY 75. 25X1A

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9. Impact on other production. The following table compares our current production of longer pieces in three four-month periods: before Mr. Schlesinger; after Mr. Schlesinger but before the Daily and the NIO system; and with both of these in operation.

	Jan- Apr 72	Jun- Sept 73	Jan- Apr 74
Intel Reports	1	1	3
Weekly Spec. Rpts.	17	6	3
Printed Intel Memos	37*	18**	6
Typescript Intel Memos	5	40	20
Daily Features	0	0	75
NIE's, SNIE's, etc.	$\frac{0}{60}$	$\frac{0}{65}$	$\frac{12}{119}$

*Includes 16 for Moscow, Peking, Tokyo trips.

**Includes 8 for Brezhnev visit.

a. These figures make clear that the Schlesinger edicts to reduce formal production and to work closely with the NSC staff were carried out. The Daily obviously brought an increase in our output, and probably some transfer of material--which would be prepared in any case--from memorandum to feature form.

b. A comparison of 1974 with 1972 shows some decrease in the total other than features, but title lists show, however, that perhaps half of the 1972 Special Reports and memoranda were published for reasons other than major policy concerns. The 1974 list is much stronger. In other words, the work we are doing is better focused.

c. The table also does not fully reflect the large effort that goes into preparation of NIE's, etc.,

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or the importance of these papers in the overall intelligence effort. In this connection, the following table shows OCI's share of the total estimates' load from 1 November-12 April, 1974.

	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Draft</u>	<u>Co-Draft</u>
NIO	27	1	1
CIA	7	19	9
<u>(of which OCI)</u>	<u>(5)</u>	<u>(11)</u>	<u>(8)</u>
DIA	4	8	5
INR	2	3	3

10. In addition to the papers promised above, we will prepare a memorandum on the NIB and how to cope with it when we have enough experience to do so. Finally, a series of analyses of the Daily's content are at hand and will be made available to the Divisions.

11. The conclusion I draw from all these investigations is that the Daily is damn good. It is good because almost everyone, whether he believed in it or not, has put his back into it. For the few who did not, the time has come to get with it. We should be proud that we have accomplished so much and that our readers want us to continue. But we should not be satisfied. We have not yet demonstrated that we can sustain excellence when the novelty is gone and when the summer doldrums come. I am confident we can.

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Richard Lehman,
Director,
Office of Current Intelligence

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